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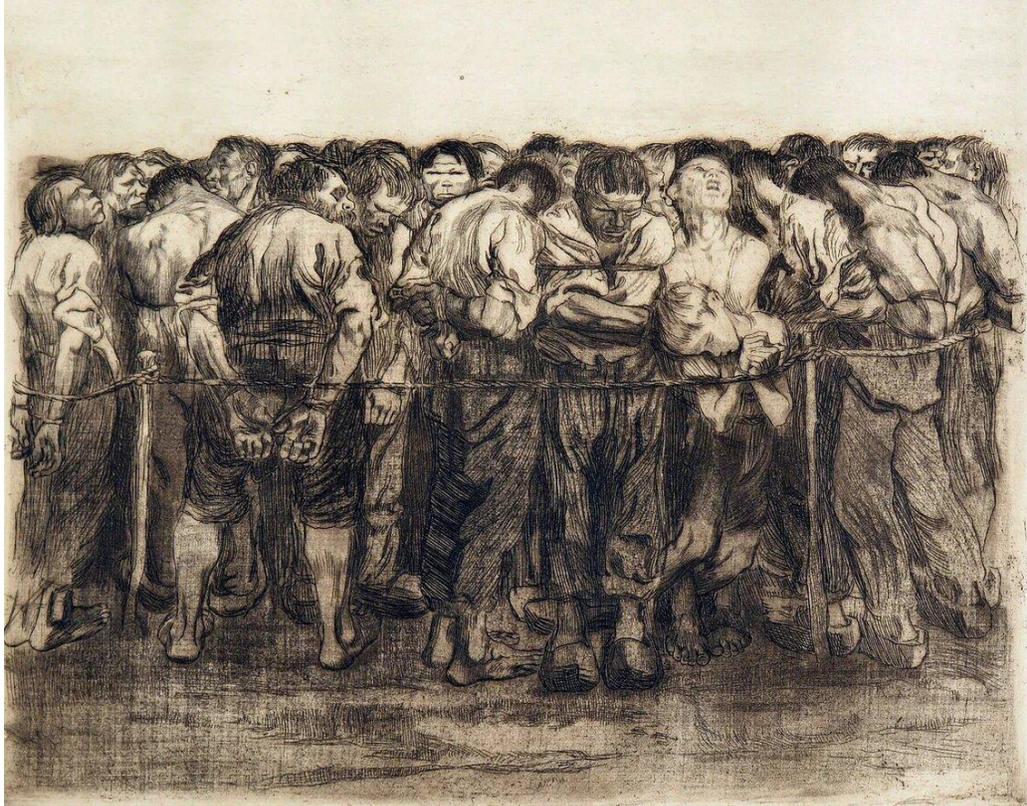
Bringing back the dead and damned.

In “Naming the Disappeared, Raising the Dead,” Doris Salcedo, an artist from Colombia, argues that the value of art is in remembering the dead. Her home country, known for its crime and violence between government and militant groups inspired her to create “Fragments,” using melted weaponry given to the government as part of a peace treaty between them and a rebel group. Her works are usually seen as a form of protest against the erasure of the lives lost in conflict, the removal of the individual for a mass, a number to replace the real brutality of war.

The disturbing, but truthful nature of Salcedo’s work, and its representation of movements in Colombia to remember forgotten lost lives, is reminiscent of the powerful works of another artist from a war torn area, Käthe Kollwitz. Born in the North German confederation 1867 and passing away in 1945, she would live in Prussian regions, as well as serve as a professor at the Prussian academy of arts. During war times, specifically the first world war, she would endure personal tragedies. After these losses would become extremely anti-war, more so than before from her research into historical tragedies, seen in her many art pieces. Her art is often labeled as expressionist due to how emotion and her beliefs shape many of her artworks.

The prisoners specifically reflect her emotions in a way related to Salcedo who consistently emphasizes how in world history and even modern governments choose to ignore, destroy, and misremember tragedies they cause. The Widow II relates to Käthe Kollwitz’s

personal losses, which relate to Slcedo's desire to create a far more personal connection between people and those who were lost in war. Mother with two children is a piece, made in the later years of her life inching toward the second world war, as a demonstration of raw love and grief from war, which would come back into her life once more.



<https://www.kollwitz.de/en/sheet-7-prisoners> “*The Prisoners*” By Käthe Kollwitz 1908

The Prisoners is the last piece in Kollwitz's series of art known as “Peasant War.” The peasant war historically was a revolt in which the German peasants of the HRE revolted in 1524. This revolt was due to a number of reasons which can be seen in other art pieces by Kollwitz.

Examples of these are “The Ploughmen” and “Raped”. Both are art pieces about the struggle and brutality which the people were subject to under a repressive government . This eventually leads

to their preparation and attack which are seen in the other pieces in the “Peasant War” collection, such as “Arming In a vault” and “Charge.” The end result of these are seen in the piece leading up to “the Prisoners” Known as “Battle Field.” Displaying the brutality of the conflict and showing the end result as a huge price for those who revolted.

In *The Prisoner* (see Fig. 1), Kollwitz uses line etching, sandpaper and soft ground to demonstrate the brutality of war and the consequences on the people. Kollwitz achieves a particular effect through the metaphorically melting of all those suffering from the consequences of the war into one mass: a prisoner camp. Squished and mushed together, the prisoners are suffering the most unlivable condition; in fact, their eyes—the gateway to their souls—are either covered or turned away. They all either look past or look away from the point of view of the art. The art form is noticeably rough, a sketch-like matter which while clean in its right paints a very blunt, disturbing view.



“*The Widow II*” By Käthe Kollwitz

1922

The Widow II, the sequel to The Widow, is a woodcut piece with the dead mother laying on the ground, head on the ground and toes spread out. On her chest she holds with both arms her, presumably, dead child. This piece was originally, according to the Käthe Kollwitz Museum, supposed to be of the mother figure on her knees, depicting her as a still alive person but later on chose to change the depiction to two dead figures². The choice to have her dead demonstrates an active choice on the part of Kollwitz to put a dead child within her own work. The way the shadow creeps and consumes the wrinkles in the people and clothes, as well as hiding the face of the dead baby emphasizes what Salcedo discussed. Relating to the idea many of those who suffer from war go unknown, such as her work “Fragments” Manifested into actual people. The marks dragging all across the woman’s feet, and face, demonstrate a sort of hardship and pain she must have gone through. A type of Pain Kollwitz may have felt as this was an art piece made after the first world war, an experience which, for her, was extremely painful, losing her own child in the process.



<https://www.kollwitz.de/en/mother-with-two-children-seeler-29> “Mother with two children”

Käthe Kollwitz 1932-36

This pain is once again demonstrated in the sculpture *Mother with two children*. Kollwitz had several children, and one of them, Peter Kollwitz, who got permission from his father, was killed at the start of the first world war in Belgium. This left Kollwitz in a form of grief and tragedy for the rest of her life. Often her art as seen in the previously shown work she would demonstrate this loss dozens of times. This was in the later years of her life, and was created in the years following up to the start of the second world war. In fact, in the process of making this art piece, she would be forced to resign her position with the rise of the Nazi party in 1933. A war which disdained her for her anti-war sentiment ¹. Many of her works emphasize directly her anti war status, with pieces often named as such (See *Never Again War*). However some of her works show this deep awful grief her life was plagued with in the years after her loss. The huddling of loved ones shows her own dedication to her own loved ones.

Works Cited:

Käthe Kollwitz (1867-1945) Biographical data of the artist:

<https://www.kollwitz.de/en/biography>

Mother with two Children, 1932-1936 Bronze, 760 (h) 850 (w) 800 (d) mm, Seeler 29 I.B.6.:

<https://www.kollwitz.de/en/mother-with-two-children-seeler-29>

The Widow II, sheet 5 of the series »War«, 1922 Woodcut, Kn 178 VII b:

<https://www.kollwitz.de/en/sheet-5-the-widow-ii>

The Prisoners, sheet 7 of the cycle »Peasants War«, 1908 Line etching, drypoint, sandpaper and soft ground with imprint of fabric and Ziegler's transfer paper, Kn 102 IX a:

<https://www.kollwitz.de/en/sheet-7-prisoners>

1 *Käthe Kollwitz (1867-1945)*

<https://hist259.web.unc.edu/kathe-kollwitz-1867-1945/>

2

<https://www.kollwitz.de/en/sheet-5-the-widow-ii>